

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 6

INTRODUCED BY B. WADDILL

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING THAT STAFF OR AN APPROPRIATE INTERIM COMMITTEE CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE IMPACTS OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED WHEAT ON MONTANA'S ECONOMY, ANY LIABILITY THAT MAY BE ASSOCIATED WITH THE PRODUCTION OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED WHEAT, THE ECONOMIC, LEGAL, AND AGRONOMIC EFFECTS OF TECHNOLOGY AGREEMENTS, AND THE USE OF PRODUCTION AND HANDLING SEGREGATION EQUIPMENT AND REQUIRING STAFF OR THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE TO REPORT ON FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

WHEREAS, genetically modified organisms pose risks of unknown dimensions to the state's economy and agricultural industry; and

WHEREAS, planting of genetically engineered crops and the production of products derived from genetically modified organisms over the past several years has far outpaced the understanding of their immediate and long-term economic effects; and

WHEREAS, recent market pressures have put people planting genetically modified crops at risk of losing large sums of money due to the loss of markets in countries restricting imports of genetically modified organisms; and

WHEREAS, people planting genetically modified crops may also be liable for the damage they may cause to neighbors' fields that are planted with nongenetically modified organisms or that are organically farmed; and

WHEREAS, the exchange of genetic material between genetically modified crops and conventional crops and native plants is known to occur and any adverse characteristics that the genetically modified organism may transfer or promote can be irrevocably dispersed in a larger environment; and

WHEREAS, potential hazards of producing genetically modified crops may include the development of insects and weeds resistant to pesticides, the injury or death of nontarget species, crop loss from seeds that do not yield as expected or that produce crops with unexpected characteristics, and allergenicity, toxicity, or decreased nutritional value of genetically modified crops.

1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
2 STATE OF MONTANA:

3 That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee, pursuant
4 to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to study genetically modified wheat:

5 (1) with respect to the impacts on Montana's economy and wheat market, including but not
6 limited to the goals of:

7 (a) determining the costs and benefits associated with the production of genetically modified
8 wheat in Montana;

9 (b) determining the level of market acceptance or rejection of genetically modified wheat and food
10 products which are derived from genetically modified wheat; and

11 (c) determining the type of impact the production and sale of genetically modified wheat poses
12 to the markets that are available to Montana wheat producers;

13 (2) with respect to potential liability, including but not limited to the goals of:

14 (a) determining if there are liability issues associated with the seeding, growing, and harvesting
15 of genetically modified wheat; and

16 (b) determining if there are liability issues associated with the marketing, sale, and handling of
17 genetically modified wheat;

18 (3) to determine the economic, legal, and agronomic effects that technology agreements may have
19 on Montana's wheat industry;

20 (4) to determine the viability of wheat production and handling segregation technology and
21 determine the impacts that this segregation technology may have on Montana's wheat industry; and

22 (5) to determine the need for and potential benefit of revising the laws related to genetically
23 modified organisms.

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the entity conducting the study:

25 (1) invite participation by and involvement of interested and knowledgeable persons, including
26 farmers, ranchers, property owners, industry representatives, representatives of environmental
27 organizations, and representatives of state and local governmental entities; and

28 (2) actively seek participation by citizens from all parts of Montana.

29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that, if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be
30 presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review
2 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2002.

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,
4 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 58th Legislature.

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